

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05 OMB-01 OES-03 COME-00 FEA-01

SAM-01 SR-02 ORM-01 SAB-01 /091 W

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R 110845Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8434

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: N/A

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TAGS: PFOR, IZ, IR, TS

SUBJECT: IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN COMPLETES
VISIT TO TUNISIA

REF: TUNIS 1394, BAGHDAD 248

1. SUMMARY: AT END OF SADDAM HUSSEIN VISIT IT APPEARS THAT TUNISIAN-IRAQI RECONCILIATION HAS BEEN CEMENTED. IRAQI SIDE ANNOUNCED A \$15 MILLION CREDIT FOR TUNISIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND INVITED PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA TO VISIT BAGHDAD. HUSSEIN APPARENTLY IMPRESSED TUNISIAN LEADERS WITH HIS FLEXIBILITY AND STATESMANSHIP AND THEY ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE MORE MODERATE IMAGE OF IRAQI POLICY. WE HAVE NO INDICATION AS YET ON WHAT CAME OF GOT EFFORTS TO SOFTEN IRAQI ATTITUDE TOWARD US. END SUMMARY.

2. IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN COMPLETED HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO TUNISIA ON MARCH 9 AFTER MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA, AND OTHER TOP GOT LEADERS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, HUSSEIN'S MEETINGS WITH GOT OFFICIALS CONCENTRATED ON REKINDLING OF TUNISIAN-IRAQI BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS.

3. JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT END OF VISIT COVERED SEVERAL BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. IT BEGAN WITH EXCHANGES OF PRAISE FOR COMMITMENT OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND, IN CASE OF IRAQ, RECOVERY OF NATURAL RESOURCES. IRAQI SIDE PLEDGED A \$15 MILLION LOAN FOR UNSPECIFIED TUNISIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND A GOT TEAM WILL SOON VISIT BAGHDAD TO WORK OUT DETAILS. COMMUNIQUE ALSO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH IRANIAN-IRAQI SETTLEMENT REACHED IN ALGIERS. REGARDING OPEC CONFERENCE, COMMUNIQUE SUPPORTED CALL OF FRENCH PRESIDENT FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS WHILE STATING THAT PETROLEUM AND OTHER OTHER RAW MATERIALS PRICES SHOULD REFLECT CHANGES IN PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS. ON MIDDLE EAST, COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT IRAQ AND TUNISIA DO NOT EXPECT PEACE IN AREA UNTIL "ZIONIST IMPERIALISTS" ABANDON
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OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND ARAB PALESTINIANS REGAIN THEIR RIGHTS TO THEIR LAND AND COUNTRY. THE COMMUNIQUE CLOSED WITH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT BOURGUIBA AND NOUIRA HAD ACCEPTED INVITATIONS TO VISIT BAGHDAD.

4. REGARDING MIDDLE EAST, HUSSEIN SAID IN PRESS CONFERENCE THAT IRAQ DOES NOT HAVE AN "EXTREMIST ATTITUDE" TOWARD MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM BUT HE ALSO

INSISTED THAT ANY ACTION TAKEN TOWARD SOLUTION THAT WAS IN CONFLICT WITH IRAQI POSITION WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE. HE SAID THAT ANY TERRITORY UNCONDITIONALLY LIBERATED WOULD BE A GAIN FOR THE ARABS. HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR. TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HUSSEIN COMMENTED TO TUNISIAN OFFICIALS THAT ALTHOUGH IRAQ OPPOSES SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO SOLUTION OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, IT LIKEWISE OPPOSES RENEWED WARFARE. ACCORDING TO UPI, HUSSEIN TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT IRAQ REJECTS IN ADVANCE ANY ACCORD THAT MIGHT BE CONCLUDED DURING CURRENT MISSION OF SECRETARY AND THAT ANY SOLUTION TIED TO NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE STAMPED WITH AMBIGUITY. HE ADDED THAT THE ONLY VALID LIBERATION OF TERRITORIES IS BY WAR OR WITHOUT ANY SORT OF COMPROMISE. HE SAID THIS IS NOT AN "EXTREMIST" POSITION WHEN COMPARED TO "DEFEATEST ATTITUDES". TUNISIAN PRESS VERSION DID NOT CARRY THESE REMARKS.

5. REGARDING RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, HUSSEIN INDICATED TO PRESS THAT IRAQ NOW WANTS TO DO BUSINESS WITH ARAB BROTHERS ON THE BASIS OF RESPECT AND DIALOGUE. IN THIS CONNECTION HE SAID THAT PRESENTLY MODEST IRAQI AID TO TUNISIA WILL BE INCREASED. IN ANSWER TO A PRESS QUESTION ON THE GULF STATES' SUMMIT, HUSSEIN SAID IRAQ APPLAUDS THIS INITIATIVE WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO PEACE AND WOULD DEVELOP COOPERATION IN REGION. HUSSEIN EXPLAINED TO PRESS DETAILS OF IRANIAN-IRAQI ACCORD AND SAID IT COULD NOT FAIL TO HAVE FAVORABLE REPERCUSSIONS IN THE AREA. BOURGUIBA, JR. INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT HUSSEIN TOLD TUNISIANS HE IS VERY SERIOUS ABOUT AGREEMENT WITH IRAN AND MAJOR CONCESSION OVER CHATT AL-ARAB IS EVIDENCE THEREOF.

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6. GOT ENTERTAINMENT FOR HUSSEIN INCLUDED DINNER HOSTED BY FON MIN CHATTI, TO WHICH ONLY NON-ARAB DIPLOMATS INVITED WERE AMERICAN AND SOVIET AMBASSADORS, GABONESE CHIEF OF MISSION, AND FRENCH CHARGE. CHATTI TOLD THE AMBASSADOR AFTERNOON SECOND DAY OF VISIT (MARCH 8) THAT HE HAD NOT YET RAISED QUESTION OF US-IRAQI RELATIONS WITH HUSSEIN BUT INTENDED TO DO SO BEFORE HUSSEIN'S DEPARTURE (WE WILL FOLLOW UP WHEN WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY).

7. COMMENT: WHILE SADDAM HUSSEIN'S PAST REPUTATION AND HIS DOUR APPEARANCE IN TUNIS MIGHT ARGUE OTHERWISE, TUNISIANS APPEAR TO HAVE TAKEN HIM TO BE FLEXIBLE AND STATESMANLIKE. THEY ARE PLEASED WITH THE NEW,

MODERATE IMAGE OF IRAQ AND THE IMPROVED BILATERAL
RELATIONS THAT IT HAS BROUGHT. THE TUNISIANS'
DELETION OF HIS REMARKS TO PRESS ON SECRETARY'S
CURRENT TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST NO DOUBT REFLECTS GOT'S
OWN SUPPORT FOR USG EFFORTS.
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